Mr. *Atterbury*'s Discourse

ON THE

DEATH

OF

The Right Honourable

THE

Lady CUTTS.

Mr. Alverbury's Discourse

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A DISCOURSE

Occasion'd by the

DEATH

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The Right Honourable

THE

Lady CUTTS.

By *FRANCIS ATTERBURY*,
Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for *Tho. Bennet*, at the *Half-moon* in St. *Paul's Church-yard*. 1698.

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TO

The Right Honourable

JOHN Lord CUTTS,

Baron of *Gouran*, &c.

My Lord,

AT *Your Command I preach'd this Diſcourſe; but upon ſo ſhort a warning, that nothing leſs than Your repeated Commands could have excus'd me for publiſhing it. The Subject of it is Death; a thing which You, my Lord, have very familiarly convers'd with, and ſeen*

in

in all its Shapes; but never, I believe, found it ſo truly terrible as in the Face of my Lady.

All that were about You were witneſſes, with how Senſible a Concern You bore the Loſs of Her: and indeed it was ſuch a Loſs, as even all Your Courage was but little enough to bear. I pray God, it may turn to account to Your Lordſhip another way; and may furniſh You with ſuch Reflections, and inſpire You with ſuch Reſolutions, as, if well purſu'd, will make You amends for any Loſs, on this ſide Heaven.

Your Lordſhip has choſen to expreſs ſome part of Your Grief this way, by giving the World an Opportunity of grieving with You: which it will cer-

certainly do, wherever my Lady Cutts's *Character is truly known; and I have endeavour'd to make it known in the following Pages, with all the Sincerity that becomes my Profession: a Quality, which, I must own to Your Lordship, I would not forfeit upon any account; no, not tho' I were sure of doing the greatest Good by it. Some part of what is there written I know, and the rest I do in my Conscience believe to be true, after a very strict and particular Enquiry.*

If I may be so happy in what I have said, as to contribute any ways towards fixing a True Opinion of my Lady's merit, and spreading the Interests of Virtue and Piety by the means of it, I have all the Ends I propos'd

to my self in this Discourse, beside the Honour of publishing to the World, that I am

Your Lordship's

Most obedient and

most humble Servant,

Francis Atterbury.

A DISCOURSE

Occasion'd by the DEATH of the

Right Honourable the Lady *CUTTS*.

ECCLES. VII. 2.

It is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting: for that is the End of All men; and the Living will lay it to heart.

THE first Step to Happiness is to correct our false Opinions; and to learn to esteem every thing according to that Rate and Value, not which the World, or our own mistaken Imaginations may have plac'd upon it, but which in

it ſelf, and in the accounts of right Reaſon and Religion it really bears.

The *Wiſe Hebrew* therefore has, in this Chapter, lay'd together a Sett of Religious Paradoxes; which however they may ſtartle and ſhock us a little upon the firſt hearing, yet when cloſely examin'd, will appear to be very ſerious and weighty Truths; and ſuch, by which the whole courſe of our Lives ought to be ſteer'd and govern'd.

In the firſt Verſe of this Chapter (the Verſe before the Text) he tells us, that *a Good Name is better than precious Ointment, and the Day of ones Death, than the day of ones Birth. A Good Name is better than precious Ointment*; *i. e.* rich Oyls, and ſweet Odors, (in the uſe of which thoſe Eaſtern Countries mightily delighted) are not half ſo grateful, or valuable, as a good Reputation, well founded: This is more truly fragrant, more diffuſive of its influence, more durable: it gives a man greater comfort and refreſhment, while Living; and preſerves him better, when Dead, than the moſt precious Embalmings.

And

And again, *The day of one's Death is better than the day of one's Birth*; i. e. the *day of the Death* of such an one, as has, and deserves *a Good Name*; of such an one, as has liv'd well, and dy'd well, is preferable by far to the *day of his Birth*: for it enters him upon a State of perfect rest and tranquility, of undisturb'd joy and happiness; whereas the Day of his Birth was only an Inlet into a troublesome World, and the beginning of sorrows.

And then it follows, very naturally, in the words of the Text, that *It is better* [also] *to go to the House of Mourning, than to go to the House of Feasting*: as Death to a Good man is more advantageous than Life, so to a Wise man the Contemplation of the one is more desirable than all the Enjoyments of the other. He had much rather be present at the sad Solemnities of a Funeral, than partake of those Festival Rejoycings, which are usual in all Nations, but especially among the *Jews*, at the Birth of a Child.

Hard Doctrine this, to the Men of Liberty and Pleasure! who have said to themselves, *Come on, let us enjoy the things that*

are preſent, let us fill our ſelves with coſtly Wine and Oyntments, and let no Flower of the Spring paſs by us: let us crown our ſelves with Roſebuds before they be withered: Hard Doctrine, I ſay, it is to ſuch men as Theſe; and which will run the hazard of not being entertain'd by 'em. The Wiſe man therefore has condeſcended to prove as well as aſſert it, and to back the ſevere Rule he hath lay'd down with very convincing Reaſons: *for that*, ſays he, *is the End of all men, and the Living will lay it to heart.* As if he had ſaid, This Dark and Melancholy State it will one day certainly come to our ſhare to try; and what muſt ſome time or other be undergone, ought now and then to be conſider'd beforehand: this is *the End of all men*, and all men therefore ſhould have their Eye and their Thoughts upon it. And then further, We are moſt of us ſo immers'd in the Pleaſures, and taken up with the Follies of Life, that we need all methods of reducing our ſtraggling Thoughts and Deſires, and of giving our ſelves a Serious Frame and Compoſure of Mind: and of all Methods, this of repairing to the Houſe of

Mourning is beſt adapted to that Good End, and will ſooneſt and moſt effectually bring it about: *The Living will lay it to Heart.*

I have largely explain'd the Connexion and Meaning of the Words, which have been pitch'd upon to imploy Your Thoughts on this mournful Occaſion. The next thing ſhould be to excite You to a complyance with the Direction there given, by the particular Arguments of the Text, and by ſeveral other powerful and moving Conſiderations: to prove to You the Folly and Emptineſs of a Life led all in Mirth and Jollity and Pleaſure; the Wiſdom and Reaſonableneſs of ſhifting the Scene ſometimes, and of turning the Gloomy ſide of things towards us; in a word, of exchanging *the Houſe of Feaſting* for *the Houſe of Mourning*, and of making a diſcreet and decent uſe of thoſe ſad Opportunities of Reflection, which God, mercifully ſevere, is pleas'd to put into our hands.

But I am prevented in this part of my Diſcourſe by the Pious Deſign of this Meeting: You are already doing that thing which

which I ſhould recommend to You from the Text, paying the Tribute of Your Tears to the Memory of One, whoſe Worth You knew, and whoſe Want you feel; and bewailing the Loſs of Her, under the different Characters She bore of a Wife, a Daughter, a Relation, a Miſtreſs, a Friend.

All therefore I have to do on this occaſion, is, to fall in with Your Pious Grief already rais'd, and to bear a part in it, by dwelling together with You a while on the Character of that *Incomparable Lady*, whoſe Death we lament; by uniting, as well as I am able, the ſcatter'd parts of it, and recalling to Your Thoughts at once the ſeveral Excellencies and Perfections of which it was compos'd: which made her belov'd and reverenc'd by You while Living, and will make her Memory ever Dear and Deſirable to You, now ſhe is Dead; and which rais'd her above the greateſt part of her Sex, much more than any Outward Marks of Rank and Diſtinction.

'Tis now, after her Deceaſe, a fit time to ſpeak of her in thoſe Terms of Reſpect which ſhe deſerv'd: for in her Life-time ſhe would

would not bear it, and took pains to avoid it; hiding as many of her Virtues as ſhe could from Publick Obſervation, and ſo behaving her ſelf in the practiſe of thoſe She could not hide, as ſhew'd She had no mind to be told 'em: diſcountenancing, as far as lay in her power, that odious and deſigning Flattery, which Cuſtome has now made a kind of Debt from Perſons of one Sex to thoſe of the other, and almoſt a neceſſary part of good Breeding.

But the Dead may be prais'd with Decency, tho' the Living hardly can; eſpecially ſuch of the Dead, as have not probably a greater indifference and unconcern for what we ſay to their advantage now they are Dead, than they had heretofore while they were Living.

There is a Publick Homage due to Deſert, if we take a proper Seaſon of paying it; and the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who are entruſted with ſo many Methods of promoting Piety in the World, are entruſted with This alſo among the reſt, the *giving Honour where Honour is due*; and the provoking the Imitation of Men, by ſetting before 'em ſhi-

ſhining Patterns of Virtue, as well as the inculcating good Rules and Precepts of Life: 'tis their immediate and particular Employment to Praiſe God; and it does, no doubt, in ſome meaſure alſo belong to 'em, to praiſe thoſe that are Like him.

And now how ſhall I enter upon this fruitful Argument? What Particular of her comprehenſive Character ſhall I firſt chooſe to inſiſt on? Let us determine our ſelves to begin there, where She always began, at her Devotions. In Theſe She was very Punctual and Regular: Morning and Evening came not up more conſtantly in their Courſe, than Her ſtated Hours of Private Prayer; which She obſerv'd not formally, as a Task, but return'd to 'em always with deſire, delight, and eagerneſs. She would on no occaſion diſpenſe with her ſelf from paying this Duty; no Buſineſs, no Accident could divert her from it: She eſteem'd it her great Honour and Happineſs, to attend upon God; and She reſolv'd to find Leiſure for That, for whatever elſe She might want it.

How

How She behav'd her ſelf in theſe Secret Tranſactions between God and her own Soul, is known to Him alone whom She worſhip'd: but if we may gueſs at her Privacies, by what we ſaw of Her in Publick, we may be ſure She was all Humility, Devotion, and Fervency; for ſo She remarkably was always, during the time of Divine Service. Her Behaviour was then the moſt devout and ſolemn, and yet the moſt decent, and natural, and unaffected that could be; there was nothing in it either negligent and looſe, or extravagant and ſtrain'd: but all was full of attention and compoſedneſs; it was throughout ſuch as declar'd it ſelf not to be the work of the Paſſions, but to flow from the Underſtanding, and from a thorough knowledge of the true Grounds and Principles of that her Reaſonable Service.

This Knowledge She attain'd by early Inſtructions, by much Reading, and Meditation, (to which She appear'd from her Infancy to be very particularly addicted) and, give me leave to add, by a very diligent and exact attendance on the Leſſons of Piety which were utter'd from the Pulpit;

which no one practis'd better, because no one delighted in, listen'd to, or consider'd more. For at these Performances She was all Attention, all Ear; She kept her Heart fix'd and bent to its holy Work, by keeping her Eye from Wandring.

It was her misfortune indeed; that the Exemplarines of her Behaviour call'd off the Eyes of several to observe it; but more Her and Their misfortune, that when they had seen it, and satisfied their Curiosity, they did not go on also to imitate it. She often expressed her dissatisfaction at that Indecency of Carriage which universally prevails in our Churches; and wonder'd that They should be most careless of their Behaviour towards God, who are most scrupulously nice in exacting and paying all the little Decencies that are in use among Men.

When the Bread of Life was distributed, She was sure to be there, a devout and never-failing Communicant; and the strictness of her Attention, and the reverence of her Behaviour, were, if it were possible, rais'd and improv'd on those occasions: The

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lively Image of a Crucify'd Saviour then exhibited could not but make very moving impreſſions on a mind of ſo much pious warmth and tenderneſs.

Books She took pleaſure in, and made good uſe of; chiefly Books of Divinity, and Devotion; which She ſtudied and reliſh'd above all others. Hiſtory too had very often a ſhare in her reflections; and ſometimes She look'd into pieces of pure Diverſion and Amuſement; whenever She found 'em written in ſuch a way, as to be Innocent as well as Entertaining. I need not tell You, to how narrow a choice She was, by this means, confin'd.

But of all Books, the Book of God was That, in which She was moſt delighted and employ'd; and which was never, for any conſiderable time, out of her hands. No doubt She knew and felt the great uſe and ſweet influence of it in calming her mind, and regulating her deſires, and lifting up her thoughts towards Heaven; in feeding and fanning that holy Flame, which the Love of God had kindled in her Heart, and

which She took care, by this means, to keep perpetually burning.

When She met with any thing in her Reading, there or elſewhere, which would be of remarkable uſe to her in the conduct of her Life and Affairs, She truſted not her Memory with it, not even that excellent Memory, which She ſafely truſted with every thing beſides; but immediately committed it to Writing. Many Obſervations of this kind She has left, drawn from good Authors, but chiefly from thoſe Sacred Pages; and in collecting which, whether her Judgment or her Piety had the largeſt ſhare, it is not eaſie to ſay.

The Paſſages of Holy Writ which She took notice of were indeed commonly ſuch as related either to the Concerns of her Spiritual Eſtate, or to Matters of Prudence: but it appears alſo that She ſpent ſome time in meditating on thoſe places where the ſublimeſt Points of Chriſtian Doctrine are contain'd, and in poſſeſſing her ſelf with a deep ſenſe of the wonderful Love of God towards us, manifeſted in the myſteri-

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ous Work of our Redemption: for She had ſomething more than what in the Language of this looſe age is call'd, *a Lady's Religion.* She endeavour'd to underſtand the great Articles of our holy Faith, as well as to practiſe the good Rules of it; and She ſenſibly found, that the beſt way to excite her ſelf to the practiſe of the one, was to endeavour to underſtand the other.

And this Book of God She was more particularly converſant in, on God's day; a Day ever ſacred to Her, and which therefore wore always in Her Family a Face of Devotion ſuitable to the Dignity of it. It was truly a Day of Reſt to all under her Roof: her Servants were then diſmiſs'd from a good part of their attendance upon Her, that they might be at liberty to attend on their great Lord and Maſter, whom both She and They were equally bound to obey. There was ſuch a Silence and Solemnity at that time obſerv'd by all about her, as might have become the *Houſe of Mourning*, and yet ſo much Eaſe and Serenity viſible in their Looks (at leaſt in Her Looks there was) as ſhew'd, that They who were in the

the *House of Feasting* were not better satisfied. Thus did She prepare and dispose her self for the enjoyment of that perfect Rest, the celebration of that endless Sabbath, which She is now enter'd upon; thus did She practise beforehand upon Earth the Duties, the Devotions, the Customs, and Manners of Heaven.

To secure her proficiency in Virtue, She kept an exact Journal of her Life, in which was contain'd the History of all her Spiritual Affairs, and of the several Turns that happen'd in her Soul: a true naked History! and yet, (which seldom happens in True ones) such an one, where the Person written of is not charg'd with many Blemishes and Failings. Alas for Us, that the Thread of it was no longer continu'd!

In this Glass She every day dress'd her Mind, to this faithful Monitor She repair'd for advice and direction, compar'd the past with the present, judg'd of what would be by what had been, observ'd nicely the several successive Degrees of Holiness She got, and of Humane Infirmity she shook off; and trac'd every single step she took on-

onward in her way towards Heaven.

One would have imagin'd, that ſo much Exactneſs and Severity in private ſhould have affected a little her publick Actions and Diſcourſes, and have ſlid inſenſibly into her Carriage; and yet nothing could be more free, ſimple, and natural. She had the Reality, without the Out-ſide and Shew of ſtrictneſs: all her Rules, all her Performances ſate ſo well and gracefully upon her, that they appear'd to be as much her Pleaſure as her Duty; She was, in the midſt of 'em, perfectly eaſie to her ſelf, and a delight to all that were round her: ever Chearful in her Behaviour, but withal too ever Calm and Even; her ſatisfaction ran deep, and, like the deepeſt ſtreams, made but little noiſe in the running.

However, Chearful and Agreeable as She was, yet She never carried her good Humor ſo far, as to ſmile at a Prophane, an Ill-natur'd, or an Unmannerly Jeſt: on the contrary, in her higheſt Mirth, it made her remarkably Grave and Serious. She had an extraordinary nicety of temper as to all the leaſt approaches that way, and ſhew'd a very

quick

quick and ſenſible concern at any thing, which She thought it did not become either Her to hear, or others to ſay.

True Piety, which in great meaſure conſiſts in an Humility and Submiſſion of mind towards God, is attended always with Humility and Goodneſs alſo towards his Creatures: and ſo it was in this *Excellent Lady*. Never was there a more deep, and unfeign'd, and artleſs Lowlineſs of Mind ſeen in her Rank and Station: as far as She was plac'd above the moſt of the World, yet She convers'd as it were upon the level with all of 'em, and yet when ſhe ſtoop'd the loweſt towards them, ſhe took care even at that time to preſerve the reſpect that was due to her from them. She had ſo much true Merit, that She was not afraid of being look'd into, and therefore durſt be familiar: and the worſt effect of that familiarity was, that She was better known by it, and by conſequence more lov'd and valu'd. Not only No one of her Inferiors ever came uneaſie from her, (as has been ſaid of ſome Great ones) but ſo aſſur'd were all beforehand

hand of her ſweetneſs of Temper, and obliging inception, that no one ever went uneaſie to her: When She open'd her Lips, Gracious Words always proceeded from thence, and *in her Tongue was the Law of Kindneſs.* Her Reſervedneſs and Love of Privacy might poſſibly be miſinterpreted ſometimes, for an Overvalue of her ſelf, by thoſe who did not know her; but the leaſt degree of acquaintance made all thoſe Suſpicions vaniſh. For tho' her Perfections both of Body and Mind were very extraordinary, yet She was the only Perſon in the World that ſeem'd, without any endeavour to ſeem, inſenſible of 'em. She was, 'tis true, in as much danger of being Vain, as great Beauty, and a good Natural Wit could make her; but She had ſuch an overballance of Diſcretion, that She was never in pain to have the one ſeen, or the other heard. Indeed This was particular to her, and a very diſtinguiſhing part of her Character, that She never ſtudied appearances, nor made any advances towards the Opinion of the World; being contented to *be* whatever was Good or Deſerving, without

endeavouring in the leaſt to be *thought* ſo: and this, not out of any affected diſregard to Publick Eſteem, but meerly from a Modeſty and Eaſineſs of Nature, which made her give way to others, who were more willing to be obſerv'd. And yet She had alſo her Hours of Openneſs and Freedom, when her Soul eas'd it ſelf to Familiars and Friends; and then *out of the good Treaſure of her Heart* what *good things* did She *bring forth?* *Her Mouth* was at ſuch times, in the Compariſon of *Solomon*, *a Well of Life*, which ever ſent forth ſuch pure and ſweet Streams, as pleas'd the Senſes, and refreſh'd the Hearts, of all that drank at 'em. So that a doubt it is, which was moſt to be admir'd in her, what She did, or what She did not ſay. It was wonderful that One, who, when She pleas'd, could diſcourſe ſo fitly and ſo freely, ſhould yet chooſe to be ſilent on ſo many occaſions; it was as wonderful, that She, who was ſo often ſilent, ſhould, whenever She ſpake, charm all that heard her.

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We may be ſure, that She, who had ſuch a command over her Tongue, kept no leſs ſtrict and watchful a Guard upon her Paſſions; thoſe eſpecially of the Rough and Troubleſome kind, with which She was ſcarce ever ſeen to be diſquieted. She knew not what the Diſorders of Anger were, even on occaſions that might ſeem to juſtifie, and to require it: as much as She hated Vice, She choſe rather to look it out of countenance, than to be ſevere againſt it; and to win the bad over to the ſide of Virtue by her Example, than by her Rebukes.

Her ſweet Deportment toward Thoſe who had the happineſs to be with her could be outdone by nothing but her tenderneſs in relation to the Abſent; whom She was ſure to think and ſpeak as well of as was poſſible; and when their Character was plainly ſuch, as could have no good Colours put upon it, yet She would ſhew her diſlike of it no otherwiſe than by ſaying nothing of 'em. Neither her Good-nature, nor her Religion, her Civility, nor her Prudence, would ſuffer her to cenſure any

one: She thought she had enough to do at home, in that way, without looking much abroad; and therefore turn'd the edge of all her reflections upon her self. Indeed She spar'd others as much as if She had been afraid of 'em, and her self as little, as if She had had many Faults that wanted mending: and yet, 'twas because She knew no great harm of her self, that She could scarce be brought to suspect any in others.

Her Conversation might, for this reason, seem to want somewhat of that Salt and smartness, which the ill-natur'd part of the World are so fond of; a Want, that She could easily have supply'd, would her Principles have given her leave: but her setled opinion was, that the Good Name of any one was too nice and serious a thing to be play'd with; and that it was a foolish kind of mirth, which, in order to divert some, hurt others. She could never bring her self to think, that the only thing which gave Life and Spirit to discourse, was, to have some-body's faults the subject of it; or, that the pleasure of a Visit lay, in giving up the Company to one-another's

Sport

Sport and Malice, by turns. And if Theſe are the chief marks of Wit and Good-breeding, it muſt be confeſs'd that She had neither.

With all this Goodneſs, Gentleneſs, and Meekneſs of nature, She had at the ſame time a degree of Spirit and Firmneſs, unuſual in her Sex; and was particularly obſerv'd to have a wonderful preſence of mind in any accident of danger: to ſhew, that Innocence and Courage are nearly ally'd, and that even in the ſofteſt Tempers, where the one of theſe is in perfection, there will and muſt be a good degree of the other.

Shall I ſay any thing of that innate Modeſty of Temper, and ſpotleſs Purity of Heart, which ſhone throughout her whole Life and Converſation? a Quality, ſo ſtrictly requir'd of her Sex, and ſo generally, I hope, enjoy'd by it, that it may be thought, not ſo properly commendable in any of 'em to have it, as infamous to want it. However, in the moſt common and ordinary Graces there are uncommon Heighths and Degrees; and it was the particular happineſs of this

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Wondrous Good Lady Remarkably to excell in every Virtue that belong'd to her; even in thoſe, in which almoſt every body excells.

Shall I ſay, that from this love of Purity it was, that She baniſh'd her ſelf from thoſe Publick Diverſions of the Town, which it was ſcarce poſſible to be preſent at, without hearing ſomething that wounded chaſte Ears; and for which She thought no amends could be made to Virtue, by all the Wit and Humour that might go along with it? Theſe Good Qualities, ſhe knew, ſerv'd only to recommend the Poyſon, and make it palatable; and thought it therefore a piece of ſervice to other people, (who might perhaps be influenc'd by her Example) to ſtand off; tho' She herſelf were ſecur'd from the Infection. This queſtionleſs was One reaſon of her allowing her ſelf in thoſe dangerous Entertainments ſo ſparingly; but it was but One of Many: She had really neither Reliſh, nor Leiſure for 'em; nor for a thouſand other things, which the World miſcalls Pleaſures. Not that She wanted naturally a Taſte for any thing

thing of this kind, for her Apprehenſion was fine, and her Wit very good, and very ready at Command, whenever She pleas'd to exerciſe it; but She had turn'd her Thoughts ſo much on things of Uſe and Importance, that matters of meer Pleaſure grew flat and indifferent to her: She was ſo taken up with the care of improving her underſtanding, and bettering her Life, in the diſcharge of the Offices neceſſary to her Rank, in the Duties of her Cloſet, and the Concerns of her Family, that ſhe found, at the foot of the account, but little time, and leſs mind, to give in to thoſe vain Amuſements.

She did not think it (as, I fear, it is too often thought) the peculiar Happineſs and Privilege of the Great, to have nothing to do; but took care to fill every Vacant Minute of her Life with ſome uſeful or innocent Employment. Indeed none were Vacant: for the ſeveral Hours of the Day had their peculiar buſineſs allotted to them, (whether it were Converſation, or Work, Reading, or Domeſtick affairs) each of which came up orderly in its turn; and was, as

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the Wiſe-man ſpeaks, (to be ſure under Her management it was) *beautiful in its Seaſon.*

And this Regularity of Hers was free and natural, without Formality or Conſtraint; it was neither troubleſome to Her, nor to thoſe that were with her: when therefore any accident interven'd, it was left off with as much eaſe as it was practis'd: for amongſt all her diſcretionary Rules, the chief was, to ſeem to have none; and to make matters of Form give way always to Circumſtances and Occaſions.

She wrought with her own hands often, when She could more profitably and pleaſingly have employ'd her time, in Meditation, or Books; but She was willing to ſet an example to thoſe, who could not; and She took care therefore, that that example ſhould be well follow'd by all that were about her, and whom She had any immediate influence over: for She knew very well, that the deſcription of a Good Wife and a Perfect Woman in the *Proverbs*, (a Deſcription which She much delighted in, and often read) was chiefly taken up in com-

commending that Diligence by which *She looked well to the ways of her Houſhold, and eat not the bread of Idleneſs.* And She knew alſo, that ſhe, whoſe words theſe are ſaid to be, was no leſs a Woman, than the Mother of King *Lemuel.*

Diligence, and Frugality are Sifters: and She therefore, we may be ſure, who was ſo well acquainted with the one, was no ſtranger to the other. She was ſtrictly careful of her expences; and yet knew how to be Generous and to abound, when the occaſion requir'd it. But of all ways of good management, She lik'd That the worſt which ſhuts our hands to the Poor; to whom She was ever very Compaſſionate, and Charitable. To the other delights, with which an high Fortune furniſh'd her, She was inſenſible almoſt; but on This account She valu'd it, that it gave her an opportunity of purſuing the ſecret pleaſures of Beneficence, and of taſting all the ſweets of well-doing. *She delivered the Poor that cry'd, and the Fatherleſs, and Him that had none to help him: the bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon her, and She cauſed the Widows*

heart to sing. Very easie sure will this make her Audit at the great day of account; that Charity, will doubtless be allow'd to be a Skreen to her few Infirmities and Faults, which, when sprinkled by the Blood of Christ, can *cover a multitude of sins.*

In the exercise of this, and of all other Virtues, She was wonderfully Secret; endeavouring to rise up, as near as She could, to the Rule of *not letting her right hand know what her left hand did.* And this Secrecy of hers She manag'd so well, that some of the most Remarkable Instances of her Goodness were not known, till after her death; no, not by Him, who was partaker of all her Joys and Sorrows.

Retirement and Privacy She always lov'd, and therefore chose it, when, after the Death of a near Relation (an Excellent Person, under whose Care She had been bred) She was at Liberty to have liv'd otherwise. From that Time to her Marriage, which was more than Three Years, She hid her self in the Country; having an early and settled aversion to the Noise and Inconveniencies of a

† The Old Lady *Pickering.*

Town-life; and too little an opinion of her self, to think, that it was so much the interest of Virtue and Religion as it really was, to have her known and distinguish'd.

When afterwards She went to Court, (as it was necessary for Her sometimes to do) She did it with an Air, which plainly shewed, that She went to pay her Duty there, and not to delight her self in the Pomp and Glister of that place. Had She gone thither soon enough, to see that *Good and Glorious Queen*, and her Ornaments of It, and of her Sex, She had been taken, we may presume, into her Intimacy, and into her Bosome; for their Minds were nearly ally'd, and their Characters, and Manners, and ways of Life not unlike; allowing for the difference of Stations.

Indeed more, I cannot well say more of her; and therefore I have fallen short, in any parts of her Character, (as I am sensible I have in many) that I have mention'd, and no more that I have left undescribed, than those particular Defects

may be supply'd from this General account of her, that She very much resembl'd *Her*, who was the Pattern of all that is Good and Amiable in Womankind.

Whether She had this excellent Pattern in her Eye, I am not able to say, when, soon after her Marriage, She declar'd to several Friends her thoughts, that Every Woman, especially Women of Quality, ought to do as much Good as they could in the World; and that the shortest, and surest way of doing this, was, to endeavour by all means to be as good a Christian, and as good a Wife, and as good a Friend, as was possible.

She endeavour'd, and She effected it; for She fill'd all Characters that She fell into, and rose up well nigh to all the Obligations that She lay under: She was devout, without Superstition; strict, without Ill-humor; good-natur'd, without Weakness; chearful, without Levity; regular, without Affectation. She was to her Husband the best Wife, the most agreeable Companion, and most faithful Friend; to her Servants, the best Mistress; to her Relations, the most re-

reſpectful; to her Inferiors, the moſt obliging: and by all, that knew her either nearly, or at a diſtance, She was reckon'd and confeſs'd to be one of the beſt of Women.

Solomon indeed, in the Chapter from whence my Text is taken, has a very ſevere Cenſure of the Women of his Time and Country: *Behold, this have I found,* (ſaith the Preacher) *counting One by One, to find out the account; which yet my Soul ſeeketh, but I find not: One Man among a Thouſand have I found, but a Woman among a Thouſand have I not found:* by which he ſeems to intimate, as if he had never met with One Good Woman among all the Daughters of *Iſrael.* If that be his meaning, I will be bold to ſay, that, had the Virtuous Lady we lament been in his Court, and of his Acquaintance, That Paſſage I read from him had not now been part of Holy Writ: for even Wiſdom it ſelf could not but have born witneſs to the Goodneſs of her Character.

And yet all this Goodneſs, and all this Excellence was bounded within the Compaſs of Eighteen Years, and as many Days: for no longer was She allow'd to live among us. She was ſnatch'd out of the World as ſoon almoſt as She had made her appearance in it; Like a Jewel of high price, juſt ſhewn a little, and then put up agen; and We were depriv'd of her by that time We had learnt to value her. But Circles may be compleat, tho' ſmall; the Perfection of life does not conſiſt in the Length of it: if it did, Our Saviour, to be ſure, would not have dy'd ſo ſoon after Thirty.

Short as her Life was, She had time enough in it to adorn the ſeveral States of Virginity and Marriage; and to experience the Sadneſs of a kind of Widowhood too: for ſuch She accounted it, when her Lord was long abſent from her; mourn'd as much, and refus'd as much to be comforted, till his Return.

As

As her Life was short, so her Death was sudden; She was call'd away in haste, and without any warning. One day She droop'd, and the next She dy'd; nor was there many hours distance between her being very easie in this World, and very happy in another. It seems, as if God, who had resolv'd to take her to himself, and to Company more worthy of her, did it hastily on purpose, lest, if the account of her Illness had spread far, and lasted long, the Prayers of so many Good Men and Women as had surely been engag'd on her behalf, should have prov'd unsuccessful, their Importunities unavailable. He may be thought unwilling, I say, to put such a Discouragement on the United Devotions of his best Saints and Servants; and, in order therefore to prevent their Applications, to have remov'd her from hence, e're they could be aware of it.

However, tho' She was seiz'd thus suddenly by Death, yet was She not surpriz'd; for She was ever in preparation for it; *her Loins girt*, (as the Scripture speaks) *and her Lamp ready trimm'd, and burning*. The mo-

moment almoſt that She was taken ill, She was juſt riſen from her Knees, and had made an end of her Morning Devotions. And to ſuch an One a ſudden Death could be no misfortune. We pray indeed againſt it, becauſe few, very few, are fit for it; and the Church is to proportion her Forms to the Generality of Chriſtians. But where a Good Soul is in perfect Readineſs, there the ſooner the ſad Stroke is ſtruck, the better; all Delays in this caſe are uncomfortable to the Dying, as well as to thoſe who ſurvive 'em.

In truth She could not be call'd away more haſtily, than She was willing to go. She had been us'd ſo much to have *her Converſation in Heaven*, and her Soul had been ſo often upon the wing thither, that it readily left its Earthly Station upon the leaſt becken from above, and took the very firſt opportunity of quitting her Body, without lingring, or expecting a ſecond ſummons. She ſtay'd no longer after She was call'd, than to aſſure her Lord of her entire reſignation to the Divine Will; and of her having no manner of uneaſineſs upon her Mind;

Mind; and to take her Leave of Him, with all the expressions of tenderness. When this was over, She had nothing more to do with her Senses, and therefore sunk immediately under her Illness, and, after a short unquiet slumber, slept in peace.

Thus liv'd, and thus dy'd this Excellent Lady, whose Character I have here represented in short, as my Time, and the Measure of such Discourses as these, would suffer me; and endeavour'd to renew a faint Image of her several Virtues and Perfections upon your Minds. I have done it in a confus'd manner, and without the nice Divisions of Art; for Grief is not Methodical: it is enough, if what I have said serve any ways to make her Resemblance present to your thoughts, tho' it be not after the best and livelyest manner: When the Life is gone, a Picture drawn even by an unskilful hand has its Use and Value: and those who Lov'd what it represents, tho' very unequally, will be touch'd at the sight of it.

You all are ſo, I queſtion not, at what has been ſaid; touch'd in various Manners, and in different Degrees, as Your Relation to her was nearer, or further off; as You knew more or leſs of her. But You do not mourn alone; many *Living* there are, that do now, and many more there are, who ſhall hereafter, when her Character has ſpread, *lay it to heart*. The World has had a Loſs as well as You; True Virtue and Piety have ſuffer'd in her fall: and All therefore, that have a Regard for Them, ſhall bear a part with You in Your Sorrows.

The *True Servants of God* ſhall *lay it to heart*, who from their Souls deſire the encreaſe of Religion and Goodneſs, and know the Power and Influence of ſo ſweet, ſo winning, ſo perfect a Pattern as was ſet by Her: Who promis'd Themſelves a mighty Countenance, and the World ſtrange Advantages, from her Exemplary Sanctity and Goodneſs.

They that *Miniſter in holy things* will *lay it to heart*, to whom She repair'd, with ſo much conſtancy and ſerioufneſs, to hear the Divine Oracles explain'd by 'em, and to *enquire the Law at their mouths*. They conſider, what an

an Helper and Furtherer of their pious Labours they have loſt; and how much more lifeleſs and ineffectual their Diſcourſes will now be, than they were heretofore, when She encourag'd 'em by her preſence, and by her practiſe; and by the ſtrict attention She paid to 'em, made way for 'em into the hearts of Others. Virtue went out from her in whatever congregation She appear'd; She ſecretly rais'd and ſet an Edge upon the Devotions of the Place: Every Day of her Life preach'd up Goodneſs as effectually, as the moſt rational and moving Sermon.

The *Enquirers into the Methods, and adorers of the Myſteries of Divine Providence*, will *lay it to heart*. Why, will they ſay, when God has moſt Work to do in the world, is one of the beſt and faithfulleſt Inſtruments of his Glory call'd out of it? why is She ſnatch'd away from us at a Time when we could leaſt have ſpar'd her? when Iniquity and Irreligion run high, and Piety is in danger of growing out of Faſhion, and out of Countenance? Why, in ſuch a Juncture, is this *Good Lady* taken? and why are ſo

many of her Sex, so unlike her, left? Is it in Mercy to Her, or in Judgment to Us? Is it because She was too good to live here, or because We were too wicked to deserve her company? *Righteous art Thou, O Lord, when we plead with Thee; yet let Us talk with Thee of thy Judgments!*

Her *Domestics* will *lay it to heart*, whom She shone upon always with a singular Goodness; who were near Witnesses of her most retir'd Graces and Virtues; and had the best opportunities of forming themselves upon her admirable Model: and who will now (alas!) be destitute of her Example, and Encouragement; of her sweet Advice, and gentle Reproofs; and will be left to live upon that Stock of Virtue, which has been happily laid in by 'em, that Measure of Goodness which They have already deriv'd, from attending and observing Her.

Finally, the *Poor* will *lay it to heart*, whose Bowels She refresh'd, and whose Wants She reliev'd: and was ever their sure Refuge, and Support, their Kind and Merciful Patroness and Friend.

But

But above all, her *Relations* will *lay it to heart*; Thoſe, to whom She was moſt nearly joyn'd by Blood, or Love; and who had a more particular Intereſt in all her Virtues: They will lay their hands on their Breaſts, *in the Day of Adverſity*, and *conſider*; how have we offended, that we are thus grievouſly puniſh'd? and which of Our miſcarriages is it, that this heavy infliction is intended to reform?

This is the wiſeſt and beſt Uſe that can be made of ſuch Solemnities as theſe; not by the means of 'em to excite our truly pious and Chriſtian Grief to an immoderate and unchriſtian Degree, nor *to ſorrow as Men without hope*; but to take Occaſion from thence to ſearch and enquire into our ſelves; to learn the meaning of theſe Divine Admonitions; and, after we have interpreted 'em truly, to reſolve to obey 'em.

The Dead are unqueſtionably happy, whoſe Loſs we deplore: Happy will the Living be alſo, if they thus wiſely, thus effectually *lay it to heart!* *It is better* doubtleſs *to* go *into the Houſe of Mourning, than into the Houſe of Feaſting*; but upon this condition, that we come

come better out of the one, than out of the other: that we leave our Vanities and our Vices behind us; that we lay aside our Affections towards this World, and our Indifference towards another; that we put on holy and hearty Resolutions of being even Now, what we shall will we had been, Hereafter, when the Fatal Hour approaches; and of *living the Life* of this *Righteous* Person, that we may *dye her Death* too; and be remember'd and lamented, as She is, by those who survive us.

Let us assure our selves, that the best way of doing honour to her Memory will be, by making her Character still live in Our Lives and Actions, that the truest instance of our Love and Esteem of Her is, to endeavour to be Like Her: for Thus, we shall even add to the Vast Reward She is entitled to, some further Degrees of Happiness and Honour, and shall make the Crown of Glory she is to wear, bright as it will be, yet brighter, in the Day of General Retribution. Till when, it may be piously suppos'd, that the Saints departed are not admitted to the *Fulness of Joy*, that in the

mean

mean time the Influence of their good Examples and good Deeds ſpreading far and wide, That too, when their Accounts are made up, may be taken into them; and the Fitneſs and Proportionableneſs of their exceeding great Recompence then beſtow'd, be manifeſted in the Sight of Angels and Men.

Wherefore *lift up the Hands that hang down, and the feeble Knees!* Think not ſo much and ſo long on the incomparable Character of the Deceas'd, as to forget the true Uſe You are to make of this afflicting Accident; and to neglect thoſe good Improvements under it, which the Wiſe and Kind Inflicter expects at Your Hands. You have paid Your ſad Reſpects to Her; be not now wanting to Your ſelves: but *Gird up the Loins of Your Mind*, and be Ye comforted!

The Conſideration of what She was, which afflicts You, ſhould much rather chear and revive You: had She been worſe indeed, You would with more reaſon have bewail'd her. But why ſhould You continue to mourn for One, who is enter'd upon a ſtate of unſpeakable Joy? Why ſhould You be dejected at Her Advancement?

She

She is gone to the place, where all Tears are wip'd from her Eyes, where there is no more Death, nor Sorrow, nor Crying: She is gone, and her Works have followed, and will follow her, to her Great and Endless Advantage. God grant, that when We also follow her, we may do it with as little Surprize, and as much Chearfulness

To him, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd, as is most due, all Honour, Adoration, and Thanks, now, and for ever! Amen.

FINIS.